



Fence Post of Faith April 2017

A Son's Needs

With me losing my dad at an early age and my son-in-law's losing his dad too at an early age to, I often asked myself what sons need from their fathers. My answer really boils down to a few simple but critical things that every good dad must do, built on a framework of providing, nurturing and guiding.

But here's the problem, too often, fathers think they're doing a better job in these areas than they really are. I've found myself asking these questions, can a father ensure he's giving his son the fundamental things he needs. (And if a child's father is not in the picture, his mother has the task to give her son these kinds of affirmation.) We invest — money, time and energy — in the things we care about. In other words, if you ever want to know what someone cares about, look at their bank statement or ask them how they spent their time.

The primary way that dads can help their boys understand that they matter is by making them a priority over the myriad demands that life throws at us. With many things competing for a dad's money, time and energy — our jobs, technology, entertainment, sports, television — it is easy for a child to think that he doesn't matter. It is critical that dads make it clear to their sons that they are a priority, that our most important investment is in them and that all the other "stuff" gets only the leftovers.

Nurturing means a lot of things. It certainly includes hugging their boys — yes, even boys need hugs — on a daily basis and telling them that we love them. But it also includes taking care of their daily needs, like cooking for them, giving them baths, playing with them, riding lessons, sports activities, reading to them and helping their mothers.

And I have discovered that despite the conventional wisdom that nurturing is primarily mom's territory, the root meaning of "nurture" is "to protect" — a role that most dads are comfortable with. A son wants to know that the way he is living his life — his interests, schoolwork, hobbies and passions — is pleasing to his father. And, as a good dad, it is critical for a father to guide his son into right actions and help him live a life centered on serving others.

However, you can't expect to teach a son the value of charity if you are not charitable in how you spend time with him. You can't expect to get him interested in your church's community-service project if you haven't established a "community" that includes him in your home.

Show him that everything he does is important to you, and then you can show him what is really important — and he will welcome it.

This boils down to a son's innate need to be affirmed by his father. Your affirmation prepares your son to enter the world with the confidence and "emotional armor" that he needs in order not just to survive, but to thrive. A son needs to know that you are pleased with him, not for what he does or does not do, but because of who he is.

And remember that the way a father affirms his son depends on things like his culture and community and his son's temperament and interests. The objective of affirmation is to meet a son at his particular point of need and to connect with him — heart to heart. Indeed, there is no cookie-cutter approach to affirmation. One boy may simply need an encouraging word at the right time. A special breakfast outing or an afternoon ride in the north 40ty with dad may be what another son needs.

But what all of these acts of affirmation, big and small, communicate to your son is that you are his father and that your love is abiding and unconditional.

John 5:19 *ESV* So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise.

Ps I love you dad .)Jeff

Ps: Please consider this Barrel Bash is tentatively planning to give one Scholarship away for the fall 2017 Semester. For those of you that want to donate you can make checks to the Mike Menn Barrel Bash Scholarship. FOR THOSE WANTING TO MAIL SEND TO Kaylee Krekel 1426 N Cty Rd 1900 Carthage, IL 62321